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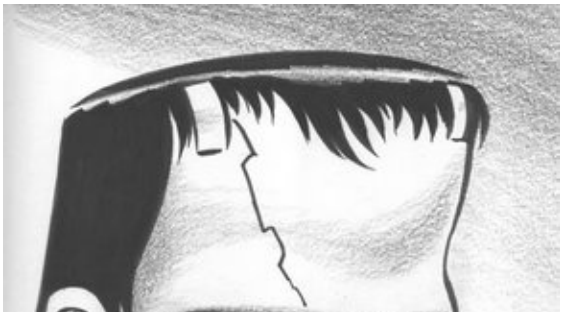
arglebargle!

monday, september 25, 2006

Timm's the Season

BOO!

Yep, it's getting to be that time of year alright! Time to get out and dust off all your rubber bats and styrofoam tombstones, 'cause Halloween is definitely a-comin'.



Bruce Timm's name has become synonymous with Batman and animated Superheroes in general...but like a lot of comics guys that grew up in the

about me

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1960's (myself included) the man *loves* old monster and Horror movies. Had he been born 10 years earlier I'm sure his covers and stories for Warren mags like *Creepy, Eerie* and *Vampirella* would by now be both fondly remembered and well sought after.

So to officially open the Halloween season this post will focus on some lesser seen Timm artworks from the Horror and Monster genres.

WARNING --Because of the subject matter some of it may be a *little* adult in content for the young, squeamish or clothing-conscious (Super-sorry to all you moms out there)

First up are some truly great visions of the Karloff Frankenstein. The bee-yootiful painted portrait (above) almost has the feel of old Aurora model box art. The two others are definitely more in a Mad magazine cartoon-vein, but just as striking artistically.

Besides, it's a Bruce Timm monster art post...who else would I start with? Dracula?

Nah, in both song and story (and my book, at least) Dracula usually comes second.

So here, straight from the 1970s comes *Tomb of Dracula* Dracula*, The Monster of Frankenstein* Frankenstein*, The Werewolf by night* Werewolf and the*Tales of the Zombie* Zombie...a...*Legion of Monsters*, if you will...

2009 is Bustin' Loose All Over!
R. I. P. Bettie Page
Black & White in COLOR #5 : The CREATURE!

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I Power Blogger

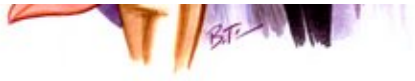
Actually, Dracula --and Vampires in general-- seem to be a recurring and favorite subject of Mr. Timm. Here's two Hammer visions of the Bloodsucker General, (as played by two different actors...Christopher Lee and David Peel) in two very different and illustrative styles.

Here's a Werewolf of sorts, very remniscent in style of longtime *Warren Mag* cover artist Ken Kelly. (Though the gal with the "tooth of steel" looks like she may be *Red Sonja* sans top.)

Aaaargh! Franken-zombies! Maybe they just think she's on the *O. C.* and want her autograph.

A slight variation on the "Blonde and the Big Gorilla" concept. Yeah, Baby!

One of Bruce's pals is fellow monster enthusiatists Henry Gilroy. Henry is a longtime Hollywood writer who works in both animation and



comics books. In the times they worked together he and Bruce recognized their mutual adoration for old Monster movies and all things Halloweeny. At right is a flier for a party they had together in the 90's (and on my wife's birthday to boot!) done up like a 1960's *Famous Monsters* cover. (Henry has one of the most insane collection of guest-artists sketchbooks I've ever seen. A few of the killer pieces in this post are courtesy his collection.)

Not really familiar with this character , The Nocturnal(?). But it sure has that 1974 Warren magazine vibe goin' on. Kinda...*eerie* ...

More early 70s-type stuff. Jack Kirby's immortal (& short-lived) *The Demon* from the DC comic of the same name. Bruce redesigned the character twice for animation, but in either incarnation he never looked quite *this* pissed!

And Sabrina's uber-sexy comic cousin (designed by Alex Toth) from the pages of *DC comics' House of Secrets.*

Given Bruce's love for the macabre it should come as no huge surprise that when the Batman models were revised for the new WB show in 1997 the

character whose makeover he was the happiest with was *The Scarecrow*. I can see that (The *original* BTAS Scarecrow was *way* Scooby-Doo). I know that as a kid I would've just found that new face just too hard to look at. *Really* creepy, like in the same file with the Mummy from *Jonny Quest*.

A lot of ideas brought to the table on the original *Batman: The animated series* were shot down by *Fox's Broadcast Standards and Practices.* One such story that never saw the light of day involved Batman's involvement with a Betty Page-type Vampire babe named Nocturna. The show was in preproduction for the fall 1994 season when the team learned that Fox Broadcasters would never allow scenes that required Batman to be bitten by a vampire or of him later prowling around Gotham searching for blood (which they weren't allowed to show either). The episode was unfortunately shelved at that time, but I'm sure the story ideas and concepts hung around the studio long enough to help inspire the below BT stakin' sketch from 1993.

An animated-style Buffy takes on a similar vampire

This one's gruesome but I love it. It filled the page as you see it here. **No** cropping...and I'll be damned if I can see any layout or construction lines.

Bruce's Vampire lust continues into this century as he now regularly provides illustrations and covers for *Little Shoppe of Horrors* Hammer Film related magazine.

Lust for a Vampire is a Hammer favorite of Mr. Timm's, (you really can't lose with Hammer vampire chicks!)... At left is Bruce's hand-drawn video box he did awhile back for his personal VHS tape of *Lust for a Vampire.* The image of a blood-drenched Yutte Stensgaard stayed with Bruce and she popped up again years later in a pen and ink spot illo he did for *Little Shoppe* magazine.

But my favorite is still the deluxe one below from a mid-90s sketchbook page.

Bruce --amongst other things--loves to draw beautiful women...and he loves to draw vampires. So it just makes sense he would eventually get to draw Vampirella when the character was ressurected by *Harris publications* in the 1990's. Here's an original page from A Vampi story he did for her rebirth .

He contributed some great covers too --like this nifty Vampi illustration at right. It's really a shame he never got a chance to do many real horror comic stories since he has such a natural flair for the material. This particular cover image almost has the feel of a 1970's poster.

...And this design is more trippy... and even more like an early '70s poster.

But if there's one piece that's a show-stopper it's this next one. It's my favorite Vampi piece, *ever*. When I first saw it I seriously thought about

quitting the business. Frazetta, meet Jack Davis. Davis...Frazetta.

Woof! Nothing to follow that but

HAPPY HALLOWEEN!

My Ocktober thanks and hats off to B. Timm, H. Gilroy, J. Campana, J. Suggs and M. Fontinelli, without whose help and consideration this post would've been much less festive.

posted by c. martin croker at 3:59 am | 7 comments

friday, september 15, 2006

Flintstones odds and ends

Going through all my files to prepare the Ed Benedict piece I kept coming across these little Flintstones related WTF's and cool curiosities --so I thought they might as well have their own post. I'll leave which is which up to you. Above is a flyer for the release of the 1997 Flintstones Laserdisk box set (Naturally I thought it appropriate to start with the "Flintstone Flyer" heh, heh...)

Not sure what the story is on these "Walk-Around" Costumes. The sculpts on the faces seem really decent...but the rest of the costumes have a "Little Rascals" feel to them.

These two are *really* googly. I can only imagine how hot costumes like that would be in the Arizona sunshine. Of course, Bedrock City only hires "little people" to wear these things and the legs are stilts. Hey, it *might* be true! (That would explain the massive varicose veinage on their legs, at least!)

WHY WORRY WE'RE GOING ALL THE WAY ON THE INTERSTATE!
THE INTERSTATES ARE THE SAFEST HIGHWAYS WE HAVE
NICELY PUT, BARNEY
Did you know that Interstate Highways are twice as safe as traditional highways?
It's a fact. The Interstate System is saving thousands of lives every year.
That's one way the System proves the value of the investment made in it.
Mile for mile, the Interstates are the safest highways we have.
We're for that.
Eaton Corporation, Axle Division, Cleveland OH 44110, manufacturers of heavy-duty Eaton® truck axles; Transmission Division, Kalamazoo MI 49001, manufacturers of Fuller® Roadranger® transmissions.
EATON Truck Components

Here's an odd 1970's ad for *Eaton Truck Components* penned by the one-and-only Carlo Vinci! Proportions might be a little skewy, but you can clearly see that Carlo sense of movement in every pose.

BEDROCK RIDDLES
CAN YOU ANSWER THEM?
1
FRED, WHAT'S THE BEST THING TO PUT INTO PIES?
MY EHETT!
2
BETTY, HOW CAN YOU BUY EGGS THAT DON'T HAVE A CHICKEN INSIDE?
BUY KCUD GEGS!
3
HEY, FRED, WHAT KIND OF DRINK SHOULD A BOXER GET?
CHUNP!
4
WHY DOESN'T THE OCEAN OVERFLOW?
BECAUSE IT'S DEIT!
ANSWERS — 1. MY TEETH, 2. BUY DUCK EGGS, 3. PUNCH, 4. TIDE
19

We picked this up at lunch when I worked at Designefx (I think at Denny's) in the early 1990's.
At the time (for some reason) we thought the scrambled answers were pretty damn funny.

In 1980, when I was in college we had an assignment to do-over a childrens book illustration with the style of a different famous artist (like Dr. Suess illustrated by Maurice Sendak). I chose the "Little Golden Book" of the Flintstones as envisioned by longtime Hunter Thompson cohort and visual scribe Ralph Steadman. I think I got a B-.

This 1960's "gift, prize or party favor" looks like it was designed by however painted the cartoon characters on the front of the local kindergarden in my hometown of Smyrna. I thought it was a mix-and-match kinda toy, but look at how "wacky" all the possible combinations get on the box...

IT'S A BEDROCKIN' BASH
for The Flintstones™! But take a closer look - things are a little off their foundation. Granite, it's a party, but can you find four things that don't belong in this picture?

The Flintstones 35th anniversary was marked with some of the coolest modern 'Stones merchandising ever. I still have some great shirts I bought (yep, had to buy 'em) at the Turner Store back then. Here's a Taco Bell bag adorned with cool retro designs by Craig Kellman.

WILMAMANIA
Hey, two of Wilma's faces are exactly the same. Can you tell which two faces match?
WHERE'S DINO HIDING?
That rascally Snorkasaurus is everywhere. Look all over the bag - see if you can find his 6 hiding places.

...And here's the other side! Too bad Wilma doesn't look this cool on the same-era studio model sheets.

Eh...I thought for a minnit this was Dave Strandquest in a Halloween costume...but no, it's Weird Al in a 1995 Red Hot Chili Peppers takeoff with Flintstones related lyrics.

Pretty deluxe entrance for a stage play as the Stones taxi out on stage courtesy Pteradactyl airlines. (Though the guys walking around in street clothes sorta kills the illusion.)

Fred's "*Real*" Cars

There are parks all over the world that feature Flintstones homes and vehicles. I'll finish up this post with a look at some of the different ways Fred's (and Barney's) Cars have been interpeted into reality. Here's one from the Bedrock town set up at the Grand Canyon.

Here's the Flint-Car from one of the ill-fated Flintstones movies (Looks like it might be in the shop with some front wheel trouble). Designed kinda long for my taste. My *biggest* complaint with ALL the cars in those films is that they move about as fast as earth-moving equiptment.

Here's Barney's car from the Grand Canyon exhibit as well...all nice and *shiny*.

This deluxe car show car "The Wilma" is more on-model than any of the movie-car versions. Be really cool if it actually worked (with a 500 dinosaur-power engine).

This last car from an amusement park in Bulgaria(?) might just be my favorite. Like Fred's Car in the original opening title sequence, It feels just primitive enough to be sorta believable. Actually though --judging by the

condition of the "happy-fun slide" in the background --this might just be the park owner's car. (I'd love to see *him* going 80 on the freeway in this contraption!)
More cool stuff next week.

posted by c. martin croker at 2:52 am | 11 comments

saturday, september 09, 2006

Tom and Jerry: Mark Kausler article from 1968

Animation fandom in the 1960's (and half of the 70's) was more underground than underground comics. If you were to find source of information it usually meant an article, not an issue. In this case someone --at an Atlanta comic convention in the 1970's-- was selling off issues they had from a big stack of the digest-sized fan-magazine *Film Fan Monthly* (edited by Leonard Maltin). I remember eagerly rifling through them, digging for some of the sporatic animation articles which they sometimes ran, and this was one of the ones I came up with. From the November 1968 issue comes this still-lively and informative article written by animation great Mark Kausler. (Wow, 1968? He musta been a *teenager!*) The Cat and Mouse duo had only been around 29 years when he wrote this summary/appreciation --over 38 years ago! Stuff like that always amazes me.

Film Fan Monthly Page 15

Tom & Jerry

The Aesthetics of Violence

By

Mark Kausler

1968 THE ZENITH

ZAZZ! We become aware of two masses moving rapidly toward us in space. As the dust clouds and streak lines clear away, a cat and mouse appear. Tom, the cat, has imposing green and yellow eyes and heavy black eyebrows; he has a very large mouth which he sometimes distorts into a grin of the foul fiend. Most of the time he looks with annoyance at Jerry, the mouse who stands beside him with protruding lower lip. Jerry's most striking feature is his small stature next to Tom. His ears are fitted into his head and streamlined to get away from the traditional circles drawn for mouse ears in animated cartoons. Jerry is anything but too-cute; behind an innocent countenance, he is just as severe in torturing Tom as Tom is in injuring him.

Tom and Jerry are, of course, animated drawings and what we see of them are forms in continual motion. The design of their heads and bodies are total. They move as one streamlined mass of big powerful shoulders with the head fitted snugly into them, this chests smoothly tapering into large rumps followed by thick legs which whirl like an eggbeater and thick tails which fit neatly into the spinal column, often acting as 'follow-through' elements in mad dashes off-screen.

The creators of these unique animals are William Hanna and Joseph Barbera. This story is concerned with their earliest days in the business of animation (through 1957) and does not extend into their television product in which they literally destroyed the delights of their Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer concoctions. William Hanna was born in Melrose, New Mexico, and spent his early years studying engineering and journalism. He came to Hollywood in 1928 to supervise the construction of the Pantages Theater which an obscure cartoonist named Walt Disney provided with some of his earliest films. Hanna was to join Leon Schlesinger's Looney Tunes and Merrie Melodies company which distributed through Warner Brothers, and later to be an acetate cleaner for Harman-Ising which distributed through MGM. He eventually worked his way into the story department. Barbera started as an accountant at the Irving Trust Company in New York. He soon grew bored with the job and drifted into magazine cartooning, and then worked at Paul Terry's Terrytoon operation in New Rochelle, where he was the student of a talented cartoonist named Tom Goodson. Barbera heard much about Hollywood cartooning from Goodson, and decided to try for work in California. He was hired by the MGM cartoon department, which had replaced Harman-Ising, and soon met Hanna in the story department. Under Fred Quimby, the new producer of the MGM cartoons, Hanna and Barbera were teamed as directors and soon were working on Fairy-Tale ragtimes in 1937. Their first hit cartoon, in 1939, PUSS GETS THE BOOT, ran for six weeks at a Los Angeles theater (Hanna and Barbera present at every night of the run) to public acclaim and an Academy Award nomination in 1940 (a Rudolph Ising cartoon, MILKY WAY, one of his last released by MGM, won out over PUSS'. This cartoon can only be called transitional: its characters were clearly Tom and Jerry, but they were unidentified. The style of the cartoon was slowed down by the Disney-esque drawing

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carried over from Harman-Ising (the studio still retained the same animators). The design of Tom and Jerry as a team was mangy and rugged. Tom looked like an old geezer, with bandages here and there on his thick, tousled fur; his eyes glowed savagely. Jerry was a fat oaf with a big black nose and matted hair on his head. Needless to say, all the fur and details of the characters slowed them down and the chase sequence was lacking in pace and dash. However, to an audience which had become accustomed to poetry from the Oscar-hoarding Disney SILLY SYMPHONY series, the crude violence and satire on Disney style that the

The following year produced one of the finest Tom and Jerry cartoons, following the beginning of war in Europe. It was THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS and received an Oscar nomination (Disney's LEND A PAW won). After a slow-paced chase which was still laden with detail on characters, Jerry was thrown out into the cold on Christmas eve. Tom, who put Jerry out, grew remorseful in a touching sequence and let Jerry thaw out. The cartoon ir1sed out as the two were sharing a Candy Cane. Could this have been an indirect plea for peace? (It was more successful than the pro-Tom and Jerry PEACE ON EARTH that Hugh Harman had directed in 1938, which dealt with brutal war scenes and the last man on earth dying). This rare insight into the cat and mouse did not repeat itself as the years went by.

In 1943, Tom grew more streamlined but still remained delightfully mangy. The new design contributed to the Oscar-winning cartoon YANKEE DOODLE MOUSE, a war satire in which Jerry was a small-time general who battled the enemy cat Tom, with fireworks. The speed and sound effects together with the bursting colors of the firecrackers made the film one of the funniest every produced. Award after award followed as the cat-and-mouse team grew slicker and more vivacious. 1944 - MOUSE TROUBLE; 1945 - QUIET PLEASE (including the first appearance of the bulldog, with Tom speaking a few lines); 1946 - THE CAT CONCERTO (a hilarious satire on the Fantasia idea, with Tom as a concert pianist); 1947 (Nomination) - DR. JEKYLL AND MR. MOUSE (Tom invents a magic formula that is intended to poison Jerry, but only makes him ten times as strong. Tom's absorption of the liquid merely makes him smaller and weaker than Jerry. The winner in 1947 was Bob Clampett's TWEETIE PIE for Warners); 1948 - THE LITTLE ORPHAN (Jerry becomes heroic in an almost-real spectacle of off-screen violence as Tom sadistically lashes a baby mouse); 1949 (Nomination) - HATCH UP YOUR TROUBLES (another stunning use of sadism as Tom tries to use a hatchet on Jerry; a baby woodpecker saves the day. Winner that year: Chuck Jones' FOR SCENT-IMENTAL REASONS for Warners, which starred Pepe LePew); 1950 (Nomination) - JERRY'S COUSIN (Jerry switches places with cousin Muscles, who beats Tom and reduces him to a slave. Winner that year, Robert Cannon's GERALD McBOING-BOING); 1951 - TWO MOUSEKETEERS (a new setting and French accents help to internationalize a battle over a banquet table. The unique serious note of Tom receiving the guillotine made this film a winner); 1952 - JOHANN MOUSE (Tom learns to play a waltz one note at a time in this comic farce on the life of Johann Strauss); 1954 (Nomination) - TOUCHE, PUSSY CAT (This sequel to TWO MOUSEKETEERS gave a deeper insight into the character of the baby mouse who came to Captain Jerry to join the Mouseketeers. Winner that year: WHEN MAGOO FLEW).

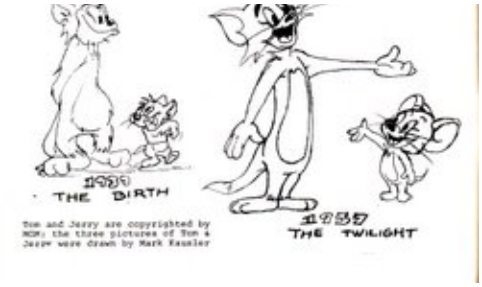
William Hanna and Joseph Barbera as a creative team began to weaken around 1955, producing one last serious statement on war, GOOD MILL TO MEN. Fred Quimby left in 1955 and Hanna-Barbera became the executive producers at the cartoon studio. Two years later, after their efforts were falling flat on wide-screens with thicker lines and more simplified backdrops in imitation of UPA they were fired by MGM, which claimed that cartooning had become too expensive. There were probably other reasons, such as an increasing lack of creativity, and a sameness in the productions (the absence of producer Quimby may have had something to do with the lack of ideas, for he was a major spark to Hanna and Barbera's inspirations in the early days). For whatever reason, Tom and Jerry never recovered their stature as a team and soon incurred a bad reputation for senseless violence.

During their prime, however, Tom and Jerry were featured in some of the funniest cartoons to come out of Hollywood. There were several which did not receive Oscar nominations that were excellent. One of my favorites is MOUSE CLEANING, which has a delightful use of pace. As Tom rushes about the house, cleaning up after Jerry so the Mistress won't be angry, there is a feeling of excitement that is exhilarating. The music (usually a JAZZ score) gives a very definite speed to Tom's motions as he drags a dirty curtain off the window, irons and washes it, and then returns it to the window. The swift, easy motions of his body, arms, and spinning legs make this a unique example of the kind of motion that the animators on the Tom and Jerry series learned to handle so deftly.

Another cartoon that uses speed and motion for comic punch is PROFESSOR TOM, in which Tom is locked out of a house, and tries to rush through the doors. Both the front and back doors are slammed terrifically in his face with a tremendous use of squash and flashing shock marks. Tom, jutting out his lower lip, takes a running start to crash through a door; this little bit of action is delayed by running farther and further back, and stretching the body more and more until the final moment of zip-out is an Olympian sensation. As Tom leaves the scene, whirling lines ("streak lines") flow out of his legs and tail, forming a huge, whirling eddy. We hear a unique sound effect accompanying this action which I can only describe as ZAZZ! It was used by MGM sound men as a bullet ricochet sound, but proved rich in possibilities (The sound editor for MGM cartoons was a veritable genius; his use of musical scoring and sound effects make a silent Tom and Jerry almost pointless). In CAT FISHING, "The Trolley Song", played by screeching trumpets, is used for the final scene in which the poor bulldog is dragged through the water by Tom's fishing line. In the same cartoon there is a wonderful moment when a big fish rises out of the water with a devilish grin and nearly swallows Jerry, who is being used for bait by Tom. The fish chases Jerry through the water and gobbles up the fishing pole. Reaching Tom at the end he slaps him in the face and makes a quick exit. The music that goes with this scene is marvelous as it builds to a crescendo when the fish reaches Tom and quickly ends in a xylophone scale as the fish exits. In KITTY FOILED, the Barber of Seville music is used to good advantage; in OL' ROCKING CHAIR TOM, the "Trolley Song" is used again as Tom and Jerry team up to get back at Lightning, a speedy cat who has taken Tom's job as mouse-catcher. There were themes running through the series that identified the characters musically, which were worked into the individual scores.

Tom and Jerry are currently produced by Chuck Jones and Les Goldman on an independent basis for MGM. Some of their productions have clever titles like MUCH ADO ABOUT MOCKING, SNOWBODY LOVES ME, THE UNSINKABLE JERRY MOUSE, PENTHOUSE MOUSE, TOM-IC ENERGY, etc. Chuck Jones, who worked on the Warner Brothers cartoons, has carried his sense of timing, facial expressions, and subtle gags into a redesigned series. These cartoons resemble Warner creations to such an extent that it is next impossible to tell them apart. The music is notable: many classical themes are used, as in the heartwarming SNOWBODY LOVES ME which makes good use of the Revolutionary Etude by Chopin. This is the best cartoon I have seen in the new series, but it has technical faults in the animation which the Hanna-Barbera crew would never have tolerated. The action is not fast-moving and the slow pace that worked so well in the Warner cartoons, where snappy dialogue was a part of the mixture, does not come across at all in pantomime pictures. Jones' emphasis on the facial expressions of the characters is novel and he has redesigned the characters with more detail in the heads and simpler, more angular bodies. There is no JAZZ or any of the familiar sound effects, and sometimes the old jazz scores are missed (not to mention the plaintive theme music). I cannot consider this series legitimate Tom and Jerry creations: anyone who makes a comparison between these and the originals will easily spot the differences.

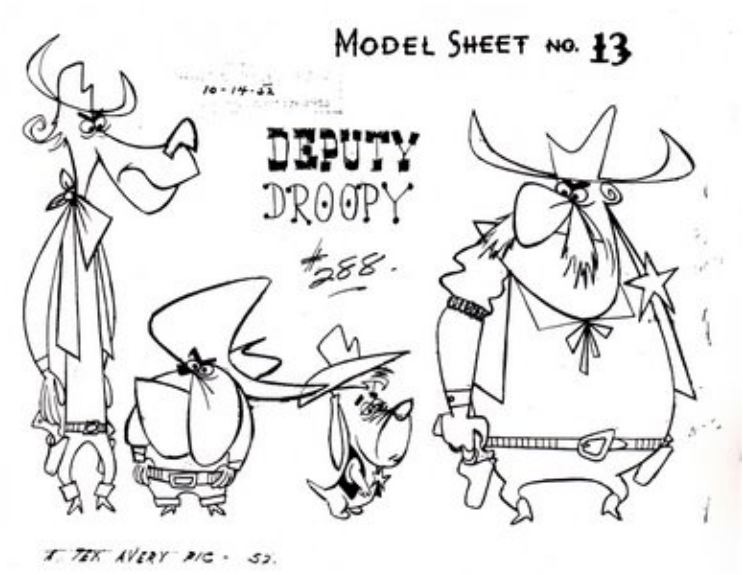
Needless to say, the Tom and Jerry cartoons have been neglected, and deserve to be seriously considered as significant creations in the art of film. They anticipated the use of the fast cutting and speeded-up pace which is now a part of modern cinema. At their best, the cartoons were of the top rank, but even at their worst Tom and Jerry were still durable and lovable characters; their films will always be enjoyed. (Other than the 212 cartoons produced between 1939 and 1957 by Hanna and Barbera for MGM, Tom and Jerry appeared in two MGM features ANCHORS AWEIGH (1945) in which Jerry appeared alone to dance with Gene Kelly, and DANGEROUS WHEN WET (1953) in which both Tom and Jerry courted in an underwater ballet with Esther Williams. In 1962 MGM released a 70-minute feature called TOM AND JERRY FESTIVAL OF FUN which was comprised of OL' ROCKING CHAIR TOM, LITTLE ORPHAN, JERRY'S COUSIN, PROFESSOR TOM, MOUSE CLEANING, YANKEE DOODLE MOUSE, MOUSE TROUBLE, KNIT-WITTY KITTY, PUSH-BUTTON KITTY, and SATURDAY EVENING PUSS, framed by sequences of Jerry looking through his diary.)


1951
THE BIRTH
1957
THE TWILIGHT
Tom and Jerry are copyrighted by MGM; the three pictures of Tom & Jerry were drawn by Mark Kausler

posted by c. martin croker at 1:31 am | 1 comments

wednesday, september 06, 2006

R. I. P. Ed Benedict (1912-2006)



Ed Benedict (left), Cal Howard and Tex Avery at Universal in the mid-1930s

This past week the animation world lost yet another one of the all-time greats, and a cornerstone of the Hanna-Barbera style, Mr. Ed Benedict --He was 94. During Ed's long and versatile career he was a firebrand, a maverick, a boon to his craft. To say that he was the world's most proflic animation character designer would not be much of a stretch.
Ed started his animation career in the 1930's animating at Universal for Walter Lantz. He worked on various shorts and eventually wound up doing

a stint at Disney working on *Make Mine Music* in 1946.
In the 1950's Ed found work at the MGM cartoon unit working with the legendary Tex Avery. Eerily one of the first projects he worked with Avery was a cartoon about cavemen in a stone-age modern society. (that being *The First Bad Man*, 1955) His next project with Tex had him doing a 1950's-style redesign of his perennial favorite, (and oldest of the Avery stable of characters still getting new ink and paint) Droopy Dog in 1955's *Deputy Droopy*. (Basically a remake of an earlier Avery *Rock-a-bye Bear* (1952)--But this cartoon is a standout because of Ed's great designs, snappy timing, crazier gags than it's predecessor, and some dynamite animation by usual H-B animator Irv Spence!)
It wasn't long though before Tex was off to Universal and Ed became chief layout artist on a series of cartoons with Joe Barbera and Bill Hanna in what would be his best-known and longest professional association. Starting with the Cinemascope Tom & Jerry *Mucho Mouse* (1957) Ed would go on to redesign the Droopy character even more for some new animated outings helmed this time by Joe and Bill. (below)

Ed worked on half a dozen Droopys before the MGM unit closed it's doors. But he never missed a beat as he started work almost immediately doing layouts for Joe and Bill on *The Huckleberry Hound Show* (1958) and the following year on *The Quick Draw McGraw Show* (1959). From there he worked on countless shows and character designs up through the *Hong Kong Phooey Show* in 1974. (Actually he did return to the biz to help out John K, with some layout on his late 1990's Ranger Smith and Boo-Boo cartoons.)
As much as I admired Ed as an artist, I never actually got a chance to meet him. That in mind, I feel like there's only so much I can say that won't just be an echo of everyting else that has written about him in the last week.
John Kricfalusi, on the other hand knew Ed quite well and has many kind words for the animation pioneer on his Blog (calling him among other things "one of the true giants of animation...the greatest character designer in the whole history of the medium).
Since, according to John, one good Ed design is worth about a hundred-million dollars, here's about a BILLIONS worth of Ed's ingenious and deceptively simple character designs and sketches. (...And while some of these images have been been xeroxed half to death...I still couldn't find

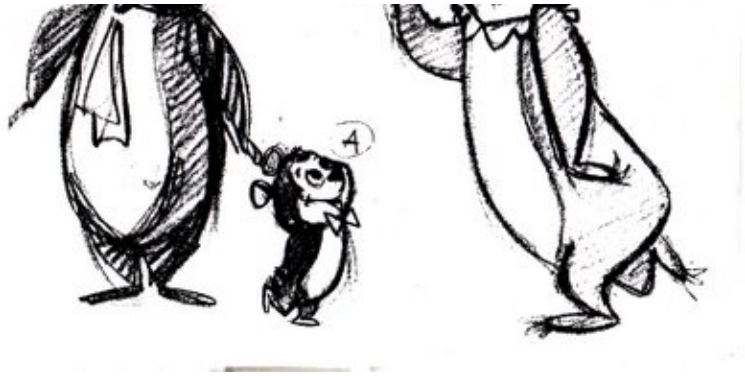
the majority of 'em anywhere else on the 'net.)

NO UNIFORMITY TO HAIR.
NO EYE-BROWS.
BACK OF ARM IS CURVED.
- NEARLY STRAIGHT LINE ON FRONT OF ARM.
USE STUBBY FINGERS
NOTICE SLIGHT TAPER TO LEGS.
KEEP TOES VARIED - SOME TURNED UP. SOME DOWN.
SLIGHTLY KNOCK-KNEED

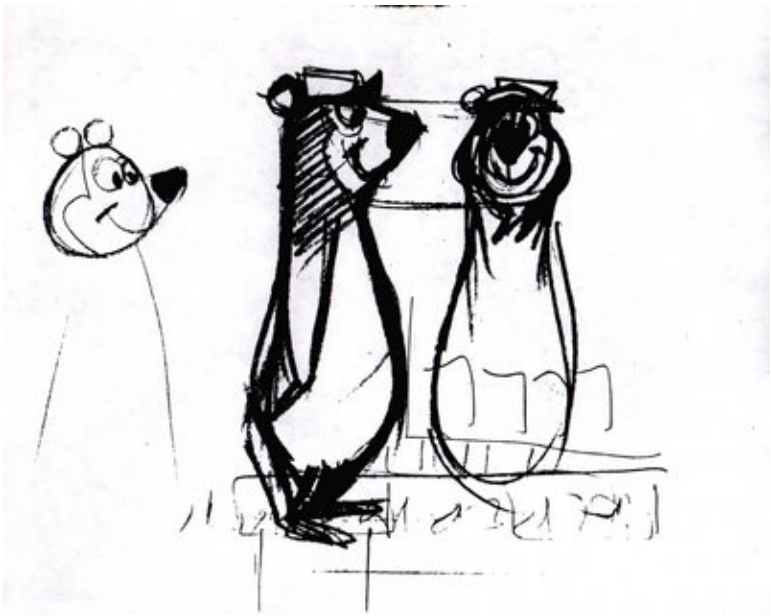
With Ed's importance to the birth of the Flintstones I can't help but start there --Most people who know anything of Ed's work know he was the main designer of the series -- however turns out I have so much material on that subject decided I wanted to use to save it for an *"Ed and Fred"* post sometime soon. Here I just wanted to pay tribute to some of his other work and show a little more of the true scope of Ed's talent and his importance to the animated medium.

Okay, I just said no more Flintstones ...but...aw hell, first you *gotta* see these cool Ed cave-chicks!

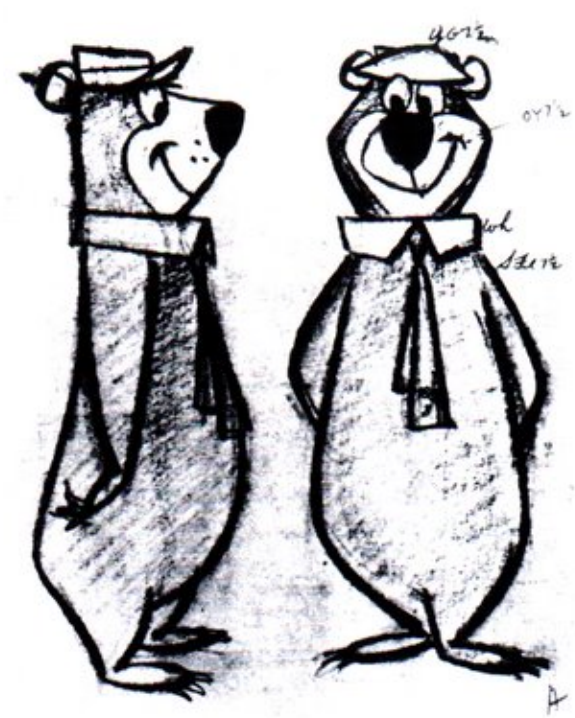
Now check out the evolution of some of Ed's first *Yogi* designs...



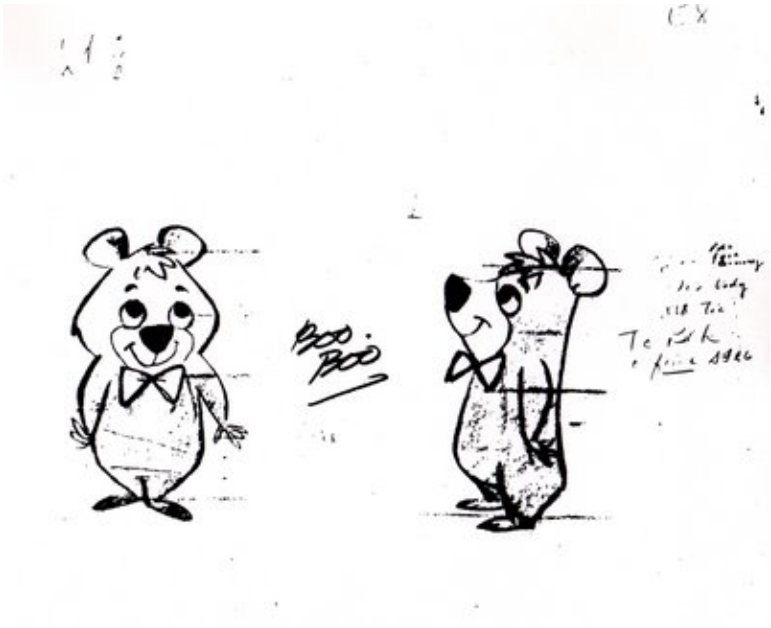
Almost there...



Bingo! --I know that crazy kleptomaniac Bear!



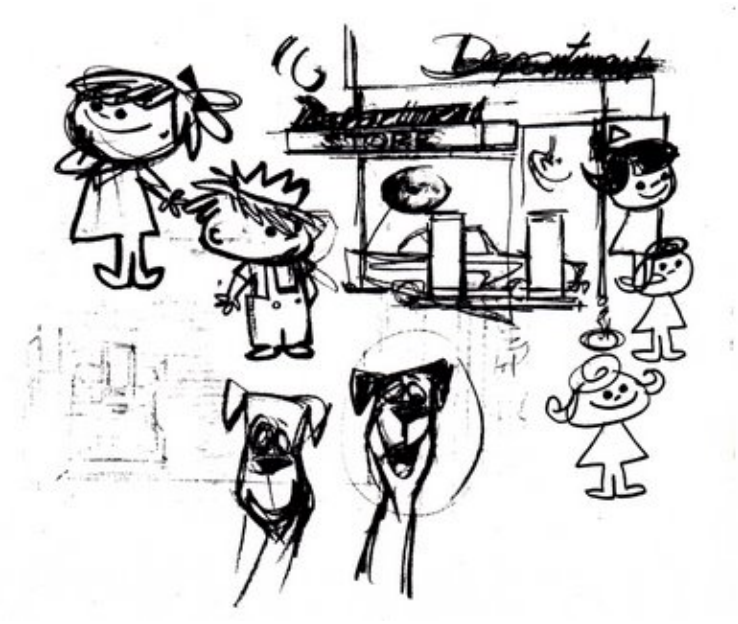
And the other one...ah, there he is...good show.



Oh yeah...Those Yogi Bear Scribble trees? Totally Ed.

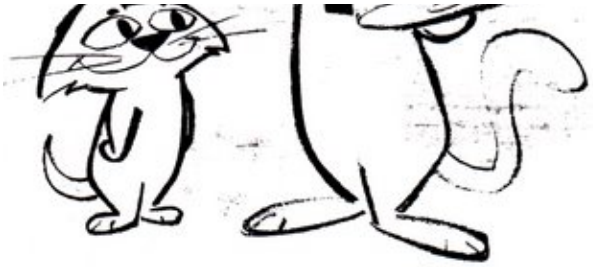
See? Here's the same type designs from the 1955 Avery cartoon *Field and Scream.*

Likewise for the origins of Huckleberry Hound...just a few lines and suddenly there he is...the germ of a merchandising juggernaut.



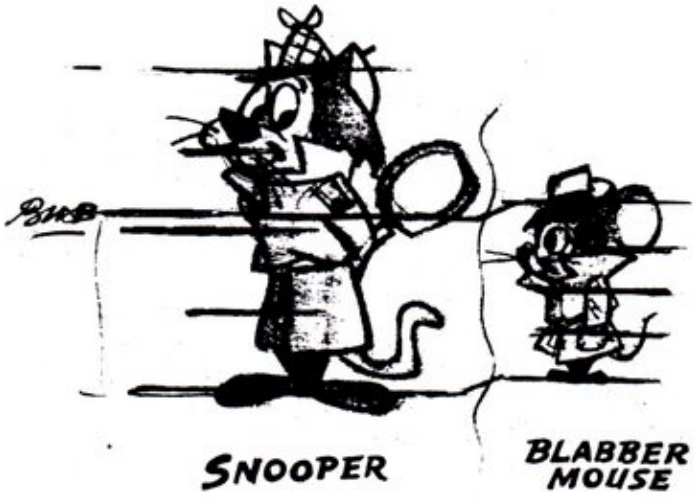
And heeere's the Big Blue Dog! (wearing the hat he wore in only *one* cartoon, to my recollect.)

Some of Ed's earliest *Top Cat* cat sketches and designs...

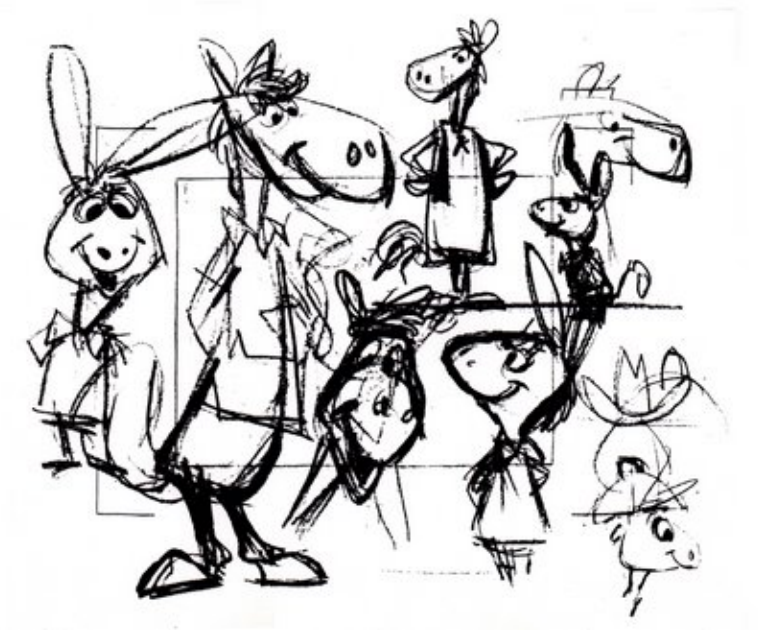


So...ol' Jinksy boy was *Snooper* briefly...hmmm.

And Snooper was...Snooper.



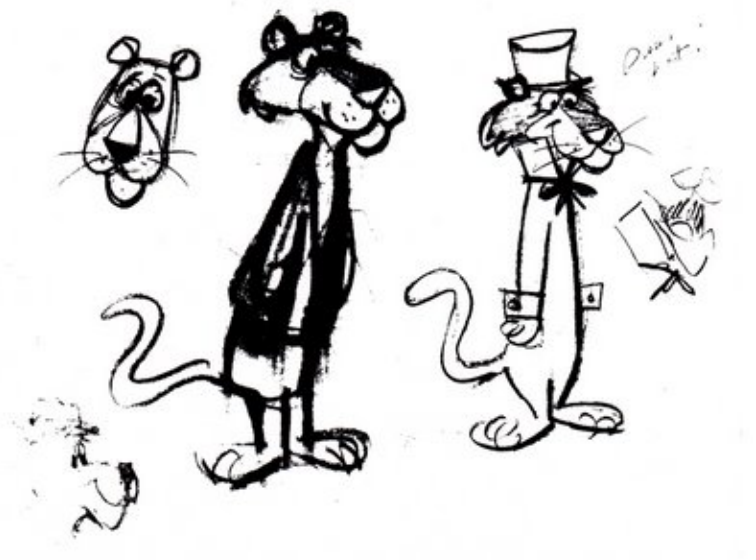
The first Quick Draws and Baba Louies.



Oop...did I say Baba Louie? ...I guess I meant Poco...(?)

Some Snagglepuss Concepts.

...He's got him!

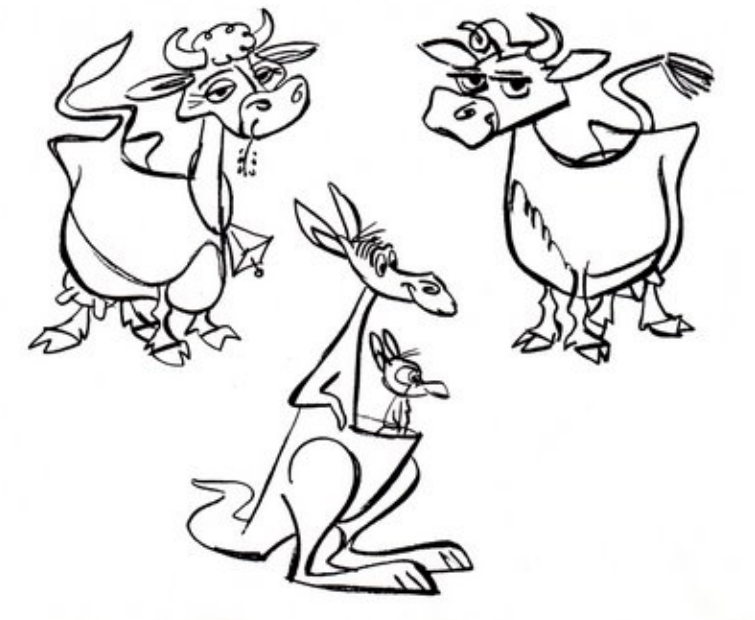


I rather like this Lippy over the one Joe and Bill went with. If you imagine it with the same voice it seems much more appealing.

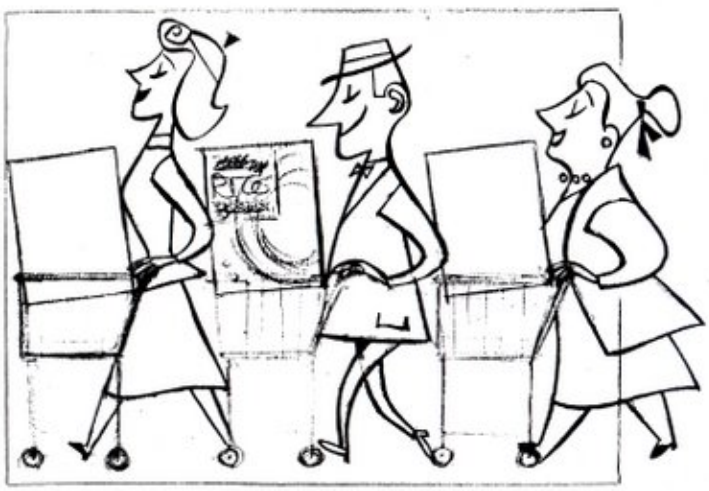
Early Magilla Gorilla...

The original *Crusader Rabbit Show* designs were courtesy of Ed as well.

Ed's Wacky Wildlife and Barnyard Animals.



Ed's Advertising Art



Happy Housewives. (They just loves to iron!)

The Ipana Chipmunk was Ed's design too!

Anybody for Flapjacks?

...And the list goes on and on....

Obviously this still just scratches the surface of the total of Ed's artristic output, but hopefully it might help provide some fresh insights as to his versality and the true proportion of his loss as a designer.
My heartfelt condolences to go out to Mr. Benedict's family and friends, and special thanks on this post to John K., Joe S., and Jordan R. for inspiration, info and artworks.

posted by c. martin croker at 6:21 pm | 0 comments